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ABSTRACT

This guide provides a framework for study circles to use in discussing how to strengthen the economy for the long run. The guide takes into account the current recession, but goes beyond it to focus on basic economic trends. Part 1 lays out four general views of the primary cause of problems in the U.S. economy: (1) the decline of the work ethic; (2) the shortsightedness of U.S. business; (3) the government's failure to maintain a strong economic foundation; and (4) the neglect of society's basic needs. These views are offered as starting points for a wide-ranging conversation, and for groups who are interested in involving themselves in the current political debate about the economy. Part 2 presents a variety of proposals for immediate steps the federal government could take to turn the economy around. The material is designed for use in one-to-two discussion sessions of 2 hours each. The guide also includes a glossary, suggestions for leading this discussion on the economy, guidelines for leading a study circles, suggestions for participants, and a follow-up form. (KC)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

REVITALIZING AMERICA'S ECONOMY FOR THE 21st CENTURY

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead

SO 023 612

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Table of Contents

Introductory letter 1

Introduction * 3

Background: America in Decline? * 4

Part I – The Underlying Problems and Potential Solutions: Four Views * 10

Part II – What Immediate Steps Should We Take to Revitalize the Economy? * 16

Glossary * 18

Suggestions for Leading *Revitalizing America's Economy for the 21st Century* 19

Leading a Study Circle 23

Suggestions for Participants * 25

Follow-up Form * . . . . . inside back cover

* Material to be duplicated for participants

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for his assistance in developing this program.

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STUDY CIRCLES RESOURCE CENTER

May 1992

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Dear study circle organizer,

In a democracy, it is crucial that the public have input into the decisions government makes. Citizens must listen to a variety of viewpoints, consider the consequences of all positions, and make hard choices. The Study Circles Resource Center's Public Talk Series is based on this belief. The programs of the series are designed to assist in the discussion of critical social and political issues; each offers a balanced, non-partisan presentation of a spectrum of views.

Revitalizing America's Economy for the 21st Century provides a framework for discussing an issue that will be on the national agenda for years to come – how to strengthen our economy for the long run. The program takes into account the current recession, but goes beyond it to focus on basic economic trends. Part I lays out four general views of the primary problem in our economy. These views are:

View 1 – The decline of the work ethic is the main problem.

View 2 – The shortsightedness of American business is the main problem.

View 3 – The government's failure to maintain a strong economic foundation is the main problem.

View 4 – The neglect of society's basic needs is the main problem.

These views represent enduring themes in the public discussion about the economy. They are not offered as the only views or as necessarily distinct from each other, but as starting points for a wide-ranging conversation. We present these alternative views to encourage you and your group to weigh a variety of perspectives and to further develop your judgments.

For groups that are interested in involving themselves in the current political debate about the economy, Part II presents a variety of proposals for immediate steps the federal government could take to turn the economy around. If your group will be holding a second session based on Part II, you may wish to supplement this brief rundown of policy proposals with newspaper or magazine articles. If you hold your discussion before the '92 election, an article that lays out the positions of presidential or congressional candidates on the economy might be especially useful.

Organizing a small-group discussion on this issue

This material is designed for use in one or two discussion sessions of two hours each. If your group will meet only once to discuss the economy,

the discussion will be more effective if the group focuses on Part I rather than trying to discuss both parts in a single session.

You will need to recruit between 5 and 20 participants, decide on a time and place for the meeting(s), select a discussion leader, photocopy the materials (participants will need copies of items marked with an asterisk in the table of contents), and distribute them to participants at least a few days before the meeting(s).

Your most important task is choosing the discussion leader. The leader should be able to encourage participants to freely express their thoughts while he or she preserves some focus to the session as a whole. A commitment to balance and impartiality is essential; expertise in the subject is not necessary, and in fact may be a disadvantage if it causes the leader to act as an "answer person." The leader should have enough familiarity with the subject that he or she is comfortable in guiding the group to weigh all points of view.

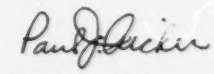
Organizing further discussions

The Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC) makes this material available in part to encourage discussion of this particular issue; our end goal, however, is to encourage citizen debate on the wide range of issues confronting our society, whether local, national, or international. We hope that this material will prove useful for a variety of organizations – educational, civic, religious, and others – that want to engage their members in open discussion of economic issues, and that it will also provide the impetus for regular use of democratic, highly participatory, small-group discussion.

Several options are available to groups wanting to carry on to discuss other issues. The back cover of this packet lists other programs in the Public Talk Series. Noted on that page as one of the publications we provide is a clearinghouse list of discussion programs developed by a variety of organizations. If your group would like to take on an issue for which no ready-made discussion package is available, a few good newspaper or magazine articles can provide the basis for dialogue. Please call us at SCRC for advice on developing your own study circle material.

We encourage you to initiate the rewarding discussion that takes place when concerned individuals meet in informal gatherings to discuss all sides of the critical issues facing our society. We hope you will also communicate the outcomes of your discussion to relevant policymakers, for only then can your informed judgment influence policy.

Very truly yours,



Paul J. Aicher

Introduction

Revitalizing America's Economy for the 21st Century looks beyond the current recession and focuses on how we can strengthen our economy for the long run. Since there is widespread agreement that productivity is the key to economic growth and is vital for our national well-being, ideas for promoting productivity form the basis of this program. The material is designed to stimulate a wide-ranging conversation about what is at the root of our economic troubles and what we should do to revitalize our economy.

This program is written for a general audience. We have tried to present basic economic concepts in such a way that everyone can participate, without glossing over real differences among economists. The background section of *Revitalizing America's Economy for the 21st Century* describes the evidence that is leading many people to think that we have deep-seated problems of long-term significance.

Part I describes four general views of the primary problem in our economy and provides the structure for the discussion. The views are:

View 1 – The decline of the work ethic is the main problem.

View 2 – The shortsightedness of American business is the main problem.

View 3 – The government's failure to maintain a strong economic foundation is the main problem.

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For groups that are interested in involving themselves in the current political debate about the economy, Part II presents a variety of proposals for immediate steps the federal government could take in an effort to turn the economy around.

A national debate on how to revitalize the economy has begun; the next few years will offer an unusual opportunity for citizens to have an impact on our nation's future.

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Background: America in Decline?

A stark headline appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine's second issue of 1992: "Why We're So Gloomy." This was but one of a rash of stories in the media about the ongoing recession and growing public fear about our economy. Said *Time*:

> This recession is different. That is the raw, uncomfortable reality that more and more Americans seem to know and feel, from university economists in Massachusetts to shipyard machinists on the Mississippi coast. Many Americans sense that the classic cures for a garden-variety recession – tinkering with the tax code, boosting spending programs, or simply waiting for the business cycle to run its course – may not be enough to restore lasting prosperity this time around. In fact, the U.S. economy needs more than a quick fix. Substantial, structural changes may be required. . . . The longest recession since the 1930s may pass by summer, but it will take years to rid the economy of debt and rebuild America. (*Time*, January 13, 1992)

Although the recession of the early nineties has been painful for many Americans, it has not been as severe as previous ones. True, jobs have been eliminated, dimming the future for millions of people. But unemployment is not as high, nor is the downturn as steep, as during the recessions of 1982 and 1974. So why are people so scared?

What worries many Americans are long-term trends in the national economy and our falling behind in the global economy. For the first time, we wonder if our standard of living will continue to improve. As Tony Lentini of Houston, Texas said in *Time*: "I'm worried if my kids can earn a decent living and buy a house. I wonder if this will be the first generation that won't do better than their parents."

Growth in Productivity: Why It's So Important

This program considers the larger question of how to strengthen our economy in the long run, rather than focusing on the current recession. When we talk about long-term economic growth, we are really talking about our productivity – how efficiently each worker, whether in services or manufacturing, whether blue collar or white collar, is able to work. (In this program "worker" means *any* kind of worker, and not necessarily a person who works in manufacturing.)

For the first time, we wonder if our standard of living will continue to improve.

In the years after World War II, Americans became used to a rising standard of living. We expected that each new generation would be more prosperous than its parents' generation. Growth in productivity – in the ability of individual workers to produce more goods and services each year, in the same amount of work time – creates a rising standard of living. A modest annual increase in productivity will create a large rise in the standard of living over the span of a generation (about 20 or 30 years). Similarly, a decline in the rate of productivity growth will have large consequences over a long period of time.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a noticeable slowdown in the growth of our productivity – a slowdown that has already de-

livered a significant setback in the growth of American living standards. Between 1950 and 1969, the productivity of American business rose 2.4% annually, a rate that would cause the real incomes of Americans to double every 30 years. Since 1973, however, annual productivity growth has slowed to about 1%. If we cannot boost our productivity above this rate, it will take almost 70 years for real incomes to double.

Over the past 20 years, while our productivity growth was slowing, the productivity growth of our chief economic competitors remained strong. Many Americans will be surprised to learn that the U.S. still leads the world in productivity – but only because our lead was once so huge. If current trends continue, our products will become less competitive and we will lose more manufacturing jobs. A low growth rate in productivity (say, 1% per year) over a long period of time is likely to have the same impact on us as it did on Great Britain, once the dominant economic power in the world. Perhaps more important, an economy that grows slowly will offer fewer opportunities for our citizens, and may have other undesirable effects on society. (See Box.)

The Reasons for Slow Productivity Growth

The reasons for the decline in the growth rate of America's productivity are not completely clear, but economists have identified four factors that might be responsible:

- a drop in investment by private industry and government, caused in part by low savings;
- a decline in the skills of the American work force relative to the skill levels of other countries' workers;
- a slowdown in the introduction and use of new technologies in factories; and
- the way American management organizes work and motivates workers.

Even though these four factors are related to the four views we present as a framework for

What Should Our Economic Goals Be?

Some people believe that the traditional economic goals of increasing productivity and growth are less important today than other goals, such as lessening the plight of the poor or protecting the environment. They argue that in the past we have sacrificed economic justice and quality of life for economic growth. Now we must establish a healthier balance among these three goals. For example, they say, we should place more regulations on utilities and automobile manufacturers in order to reduce air pollution, even if that will reduce productivity and slow overall economic growth.

The more traditional view is that economic growth is the correct focus for our economic policy, because higher productivity is a prerequisite for realizing other goals. Daniel Yankelovich took this position in *The American Enterprise* (Sept./Oct. 1990):

In the 1960s and 1970s a rising tide lifted all boats. . . . Not surprisingly, young people with a college education were able to improve themselves and make a good living. But so, too, were young workers *without* a college education. . . . The abundance of opportunity in those years spurred the public to generosity. . . . The success of the traditional American strategy - advancing equality of opportunity - depends on broad-based economic growth in manufacturing as well as services.

The social consequences of not . . . [improving economic competitiveness] are less familiar than the economic ones but potentially far more disturbing. . . . This is a formula for social and political instability. The history of this century shows that there is no more potent negative political force than downward mobility. If the American Dream becomes a mockery for tens of millions of vigorous young Americans, who, it should be remembered, represent mainstream American youth, not just inner-city minorities, the nation can expect increasing levels of violence, crime, drug addiction, rioting, sabotage, and social instability. . . . History suggests that under such circumstances, demagoguery is almost inevitable.

(This worthwhile debate is the subject of another Study Circles Resource Center publication, *American Society and Economic Policy: What Should Our Goals Be?*)

your discussion, there are differences. The factors described here paint a picture of America's economy with which most economists would agree, while the four views that come later represent the arguments of advocates that lead to distinct policy proposals.

Investment and Savings. Investment in new capital – equipment, factories, and infrastructure (schools, roads, bridges, airports, railways, etc.) – is an important part of productivity growth. New machines, better technology, and improved transportation make businesses more productive, which eventually raises the incomes of workers, managers, and owners.

In the private sector, U.S. businesses have not been investing enough in new technology and equipment. *The Economist* reported on January 18, 1992: "American businesses are investing far too little in their future. At only 9% of national income, they spend less than half as much as Japan (almost 20%) each year on new capital, and roughly one-third less than Germany (13%)." In the public sector, government has not been investing enough in our infrastructure. Spending on infrastructure projects has declined from 3.2% of gross national product (GNP) to 1.6%. Japan, by contrast, invests 5% of its GNP in its infrastructure.

The funds for capital investments come from both Americans' private and public savings and, through borrowing, from foreigners. Private savings result when citizens set aside money, whether for retirement, for future purchases or expenses, or for their children. Public savings are a result of government budget surpluses. (While many state governments ran budget surpluses or had balanced budgets until recent years, the federal government has run a budget deficit since the 1970s.)

In order to have more money to invest, we must save more. However, during the past decade the rate of national savings dropped significantly. In 1990 Americans saved less than 5% of disposable income, far less than did Japanese and Germans, who both saved around 14%. American consumers and industry more than doubled their debt in the 1980s, and the federal government has been running larger and larger budget deficits. The projected 1992 shortfall is almost $400 billion. The total national debt has tripled since 1980; it is now $3.1 trillion, which amounts to roughly $10,000 for every man, woman, and child in the country.

The drop in investment in the 1980s was not as steep as it might have been because government and businesses were able to borrow from the rest of the world in order to invest. Also, businesses and individuals borrowed money to pay for the trade deficit – the difference between what we spend on imported goods and what we receive for the goods we export. As a result, the U.S. now has a large debt to foreign creditors – a situation that has its drawbacks. This debt represents a claim

How Federal Budget Deficits and the National Debt Hurt the Economy

While there are some economists that argue that large federal budget deficits are not necessarily a problem, many believe that they hurt our economy in two ways:

1) A decade of large deficits has led to an enormous national debt. The payments that we must make on this debt ($286 billion next year – one out of five dollars that Washington will spend) will limit government's ability to invest in infrastructure and in research and development (R&D) for many years. This is a common problem in the third world, where citizens labor to pay their nation's creditors for past consumption rather than to invest in their future.

2) Large amounts of government borrowing raise interest rates. Higher interest rates reduce business investment and hurt companies because it costs them more to borrow money.

There is widespread agreement that what has hurt our economy is *not* just the large debt itself, but the fact that we did not use the money wisely. If we had saved and invested the money we borrowed for the future – instead of consuming it for the present – it would have made us more productive and wealthier. If we were wealthier, paying off the debt would be less of a burden.

that others have on our future output. Since we will have to send increasing proportions of our national income out of the country in order to pay off our debts, increasing amounts will not be available for savings and investment to increase our productivity and wealth. If the growth rate in our productivity compared favorably with others' growth rates, this would be a less daunting prospect.

. *Work Force Skills.* While American workers are still the most productive in the world, our lead is slipping fast. If current trends continue, we may not have enough well-educated and well-trained workers to handle the more demanding jobs of the future.

One possible reason that our work force skills have declined relative to those of other countries is that American companies and government don't spend as much as other nations on job training. We also do not prepare young people for working life as well as do our competitors. In Germany, for example, an apprenticeship system not only teaches most young people how to do their jobs, often right in the factory, it provides each young person with a mentor. In Japan, companies extensively train new employees and make a life-long commitment to keep and retrain them.

Perhaps the main cause for the decline in work force skills is the failure of many American students to get a basic education in grade school and high school. We frequently hear about companies that are unable to find qualified applicants to fill entry-level jobs. *Fortune* (December 17, 1990) described a situation that has become commonplace: "Motorola recently determined that employees should have at least fifth-grade math skills and seventh-grade reading skills to work in its plants – only to discover that fully half its workers need remedial training to reach this level!"

Use of New Technologies. While the U.S. is the world leader in basic scientific research and in inventing new technology, other countries excel at turning U.S. inventions into marketable consumer products. For example, Americans invented the VCR, but Japan so dominates the consumer electronics industry that no VCRs are currently made in the USA. One explanation for this weakness is that we graduate half as many engineers per capita as does Japan. (Many are quick to point out that we train more lawyers and MBAs per capita than anyone else in the world.)

Part of the problem may be that in the U.S. there is proportionally less investment in research and development that has commercial possibilities. The U.S. government invests 1.8% of its GNP in non-military R&D, lagging behind Japan's 2.8% and Germany's 2.6%. We emphasize military research and development, and even in civilian R&D a large portion of funding goes to the space program and to massive research programs in basic science. In sum, while other governments invest more to develop technology for consumer goods, much of America's research is too exotic to be commercially useful. The answer may be not to give up our strength in basic research but to augment it with an increased investment in research for applied technologies.

Some think that the traditional American management style leads to slower growth in productivity.

The Organization of Work. Some think that the traditional American management style leads to slower growth in productivity. This style – rigid, top-down, hierarchical – may not be as effective as management styles that encourage workers to take part in the planning and management processes. Teamwork models developed in the U.S. and "quality circles" in Japan seem to indicate that people work better when they work cooperatively, especially when they are given some control over their work.

But American management has been slow to adopt these new ways, in part because it has structured work in a top-down way for so long.

Unions, business, and the government come together as partners in countries where there is an explicit industrial policy. In those countries workers have more of a voice in management decisions, and more of a stake in the companies. For example, German unions have representatives on the boards of directors of big companies. In Japan, companies hire workers for life, and executives take pay cuts and trim other expenses before laying off workers.

The Result of Falling Behind: Smaller Paychecks

The weaknesses described above have led to slower growth in productivity. This has led in turn to lower wages, affecting many Americans where it hurts – in their paychecks.

Over the past 15 years, earnings have stagnated. Taking inflation into account, the median family income has increased at an average annual rate of only 0.3% over the past 20 years, from $24,345 to $25,830 – despite the fact that increasing numbers of families now have two wage earners instead of one, and despite the fact that Americans are working more hours! By comparison, incomes grew nine times as fast from 1959 to 1973, at 2.7% a year.

Along with a slower growth in productivity, an upward redistribution of income during the 1980s has affected American earnings. Job and earnings prospects for the roughly half of all Americans who do not go to college have declined significantly as we have lost manufacturing jobs. Daniel Yankelovich writes: "From the mid-1970s to 1986, the median income of young males without some college education has been slashed by 35%. For high school drop-outs, median income has dropped an amazing 42%!" (*The American Enterprise*, Sept./Oct. 1990). Many of the people who have been laid off from high-paying manufacturing jobs may never again hold jobs that pay as well.

Because productivity has grown so slowly, many American industries – including computer chips, machine tools, consumer electronics, and automobiles – have lost customers and therefore jobs to companies in other countries. As a result of losing jobs in high-paying industries

Over the past 15 years, earnings have stagnated.

such as these, a greater proportion of American workers is employed in lower-paying service and manufacturing jobs.

Too Gloomy?

Despite these facts and figures, some analysts believe that the weakness of America's economy has been exaggerated. The British magazine *The Economist* argued in an editorial that Americans' view of the economy is "hopelessly distorted" ("Sam, Sam, the Paranoid Man," January 18, 1992).

To support its argument, *The Economist* states that over the past five years the amount of our manufactured exports rose by 90% and our trade deficit declined from $160 to $72 billion. American companies in fields as diverse as aircraft, computer software, and pharmaceuticals are world leaders, have added jobs, and are increasing their productivity. And, U.S. productivity growth in manufacturing increased in the 1980s, and was actually slightly higher than Japan's. The U.S. remains the world's leader in developing new technology, and American universities are the best in the world.

Unfortunately, most economists do not agree with this optimistic spin. While acknowledging the bright spots, they say the major trends are in the wrong direction. We are falling behind or already behind in areas in which we led for decades. In those spheres in which we still hold a lead, such as overall productivity, our competitors are rapidly catching up. Our overall growth rate in productivity, which includes both the service and the manufacturing sectors, has been the slowest of the

industrialized nations in the past three decades. (Some have said that our performance in the service sector is especially important, since services make up a much larger share of our economy than does manufacturing.)

Fixing Our Productivity Problem

Most economists agree that we must fix our productivity problem if our standard of living is to resume its upward climb. Harvard University's Benjamin A. Friedman said in *Business Week* (January 20, 1992): "What America needs is more investment in new factories, new machinery, new research, new infrastructure, and a better educated work force – and not more consumption." And Allen Sinai, chief economist of the Boston Company said in *Time*: "We are at an important crossroads. . . . This is the time to take major steps and make major changes. The economy is beset by structural, long-term problems that cry out for a systematic plan of attack."

While there is agreement on the goal of improving our productivity growth rate, there is disagreement about how to achieve it.

While there is agreement on the goal of improving our productivity growth rate, there is disagreement about how to achieve it. This disagreement stems from different views of the underlying problems in our economy – that is, different explanations of "how we got into this mess."

As a framework for your group's discussion, the following section presents four different views of what is the main underlying problem in our economy and explains the broad, long-term changes that supporters of each of these views advocate.

Part I - The Underlying Problems and Potential Solutions: Four Views

Our understanding of our economic problems shapes what we plan to do about them. The following pages present four different views of why our economy is slipping, along with corresponding prescriptions for its revitalization.

The material explains each of the views in turn, using the voice of a supporter of that view. The views are not necessarily exclusive of one another, but each represents a set of commonly held beliefs and values. With each of these views we include some of the evidence its supporters use; we leave it to your study circle to point out the counter-evidence for each position. Since each view calls for a different response, each is accompanied by a set of proposals for long-term changes to improve the economy.

You will probably agree with some points in each of these views; you may even think that all four are partially correct. We encourage you to express your agreements and disagreements with each view: Where is it right? Where does it miss the mark?

As your group considers all four views, you will be able to reconsider your opinions in light of others' ideas. Do you favor one of the four descriptions of "how we got into this mess"? Or, is there some combination of views that best describes our economy's underlying problems? Do you have a completely different idea about what the problems are?

As the discussion proceeds, listen carefully to what others have to say. Try to keep an open mind and to understand where the other participants are coming from. This is a large topic, and each person's unique experiences will shape his or her view of what's wrong with the economy and how to fix it.

Finally, as you consider the proposed solutions that accompany each view, ask yourself: Which ones are most likely to work? Which ones will be ineffective or make the situation worse? Most important of all, which of the proposed remedies should have the highest priority? What would be *your* program for revitalizing our economy over the next decade?

View 1 – The decline of the work ethic is the main problem.

Our economic problems stem primarily from a lack of moral fiber throughout all classes in our society. At one time Americans worked hard and took pride in their work. We were known for our "Can do!" attitude, for getting the job done.

Now too many Americans want it easy and want to get rich quick. While once the American Dream was to work hard and to get ahead by moving up in a company or by starting your own business, now many Americans dream about winning the lottery.

Too many American workers just "get by" and do the bare minimum when they're at work. Alcohol and drug abuse is a significant problem. At the bottom of the ladder, workers take advantage of "the system" however they can, for example, calling in sick when they're not, especially on Fridays and Mondays.

Everybody expects more money, whether they deserve it or not. Workers expect high wages and benefits regardless of how an industry is doing. As a result, labor costs are so high that we lose factories and jobs to other countries. Executives' pay often has no connection to a company's performance, and is absurdly high compared to what workers earn. What does it do for morale when a struggling company lays off employees and then gives million-dollar bonuses to its executives?

The decline in our work ethic extends to families and children. Many Americans seem unwilling to delay gratification. Families used to save for their children's future; now, they are heavily in debt. Once America was owed more money than any other nation, but now we are the world's largest debtor.

More of our children are dropping out and the ones that stay in school are learning less than the previous generation did. Illiteracy is high (27 million Americans over age 17 are functionally illiterate) and on the rise. Many parents either don't care or are too busy to make sure their kids do their homework. Children and adults alike watch too much TV.

Proposed Solutions

Those who see our economic problems as primarily due to a declining work ethic say that to find long-term solutions we should:

- Return to the basic values which made this country great: hard work, pride in our work, compensation based on performance, self-improvement, thrift, sacrifice, and a commitment to provide our children with a better life.
- Increase parental involvement with their children's education, at home and through working to improve the schools.
- Improve work skills through increased participation in education and training. Business and government can help by providing more on-the-job training and student loans.
- Develop better financial habits. Families must consume less, borrow less, and save more.

14

View 2 – The shortsightedness of American business is the main problem.

For 30 years after World War II, American companies were the world's most productive. Business and labor leaders from other countries learned from us. But over the last 20 years something has gone wrong with American business.

Once upon a time, American business leaders focused on producing quality products, on developing new technology, and on steadily improving their products. They invested for the future and built up their companies for the long haul. Now, many corporate managers and boards of directors are primarily concerned with short-term profits and "the bottom line" for the next quarter.

During the 1970s many American managers were complacent, and the quality of many American products declined. Many of America's business leaders spent the 1980s engaged in financial manipulations that did not create new products, new jobs, or real wealth. They speculated in real estate and development, going heavily into debt, built wealth on paper through leveraged buyouts and mergers and acquisitions, and issued junk bonds to borrow money, paying lawyers and financiers enormous fees.

Instead of retaining American jobs by investing in new equipment, upgrading factories in the U.S., and retraining workers, many corporate leaders chose to move production overseas where wages are lower and profits are higher. Even when production stays at home, American managers are behind the times in the ways they organize work and motivate workers. Many Americans think that unions are also part of the problem.

In comparison with other countries, there is little history of structured cooperation among business, labor, and government. In our chief competitors' systems, the three sectors work together closely to enhance their companies' productivity, often following the guidelines of an explicit plan (an "industrial policy") developed by government. While this may or may not be the answer for America, how can we do our best if we are failing to work together as well as we could?

Proposed Solutions

Those who think that American business is responsible for our economic woes suggest that we should:

- Emphasize long-term growth instead of short-term profits. Increase investment in R&D, new equipment, and worker training.
- Increase government regulation of business in order to restore a focus on long-term growth and to prevent corporate excess and irresponsibility such as that represented by the savings and loan disaster.
- Practice a more effective management style that gives workers more responsibility, emphasizes teamwork, and enhances motivation.
- Increase structured cooperation among business, unions, and government.

View 3 – Government's failure to maintain a strong economic foundation is the main problem.

The federal government has primary responsibility for the economy. While there is a debate about the extent to which government should be involved in the economy, few would deny that there are some areas where government *must* be deeply involved. In many of these areas, Washington has failed to provide leadership or has simply failed to do the job.

Our national budget deficit is out of control. A few economists argue that it's not a problem, but most think it is. Everyone agrees that the enormous national debt severely limits what government can do to make the economy more productive.

Our government has failed to invest enough money in our infrastructure, the foundation of our economy. Poor roads and railways, deteriorating bridges and school buildings, and air travel delays make American companies less competitive. Lack of government investment has slowed our progress in making more efficient use of energy, causing a much larger trade deficit than is necessary. Washington has neglected civilian research and development, especially for moving new technology from the drawing board to the factory.

Federal tax laws don't do enough to spur business investment and support worker training, and many leaders are calling for changes in tax laws. Federal laws and regulations also contribute to the corporate focus on short-term profits.

Washington has allowed other nations to take advantage of our free trade policy and has failed to protect American companies from unfair trade practices. Countries like Japan have barriers for our products, but we let them sell their products here. This contributes to our trade deficit and costs American jobs.

We continue to spend a major portion of our military budget to defend Japan and Europe – our primary economic competitors. As a result we have less money to invest in making our economy more productive, and they have more.

There is a debate about government's proper role on some of the above issues. Some think Washington should be more involved. They argue for an industrial policy that would provide government support for research and development of new technologies, strong action on trade, and more regulation. Others say government should stay out of business's affairs, because government is incompetent and because economic decisions would be influenced by politics. They argue that high taxes, excessive regulation, and red tape have hurt our economy.

But these differences about the proper role of government are minor compared to the broad agreement about where the government has gone wrong on the economy.

Proposed Solutions

Critics of the government's handling of the economy often do not agree with each other. A variety of long-term remedies have been suggested, some of which conflict with others:

- Reduce the federal budget deficit.
- Increase investment. Rebuild our infrastructure through large public works programs, increase spending on civilian R&D, improve energy efficiency, and provide tax breaks for investment.
- Establish an industrial policy and help develop emerging technologies into important new industries.
- Protect American companies: force Japan to open its markets or demand trade concessions to level the playing field.
- Reduce taxes, regulations, and red tape.
- Cut our military forces dramatically and use the "peace dividend" to strengthen the economy.

View 4 – Neglect of society's basic needs is the main problem.

Our society and our work force have become weak because we do not invest enough in the health, well-being, and education of our own people. Many Americans do not receive the social assistance they need to be productive workers. This lack of support has hastened the decline of the most important institution in our society – the family. Our competitors' societies simply take better care of their workers, and it shows in their productivity.

Our society's greatest weakness is the sad condition of our primary and secondary schools. Even though problems are greatest in inner cities and poor rural areas, our entire educational system is in trouble. While the top 10% of American students match the best in any nation, the vast majority of students lags behind. Many in the lower third leave school without adequate skills for even entry-level jobs.

Our priorities are confused: many of the well-off receive large government benefits like Social Security, Medicare, and tax breaks on mortgage interest, but one-fifth of our children live in poverty.

Our expensive and inefficient health care system is not only an enormous financial burden on American companies, it saps our workers' productivity. The 33 million Americans without health insurance (most of whom work or are a dependent of a worker) are less healthy because they can't afford checkups and preventive health care.

There is a general deterioration in our society exemplified by the following:

- Crime and violence. We have the highest murder rate and incarceration rate in the industrialized world.
- Alcohol and drug abuse. These are an enormous drain on our workers' and students' productivity.
- Teenage pregnancy and single-parent families. Every year 127 out of 1,000 American teenage girls becomes pregnant, the highest rate in the industrialized world.
- Rising poverty. After two decades of decline, the poverty rate rose again in the 1980s, especially for women and children.

While it is hard to measure the precise impact of these factors on the productivity of American workers, it seems evident that the insecurity, fear, deprivation, and hopelessness experienced by some in our society must take its toll on the entire society.

Proposed Solutions

To make our society more healthy and our work force more productive in the long run, we should:

- Improve our primary and secondary schools.
- Reform our health care system to cover everyone, reduce the burden on business, and control costs.
- Provide more support for families – especially the poor and lower middle class – in their everyday struggle to just "keep it together." Families need better day care, more family leave, and larger tax breaks for children.
- Increase government support for children who live in poverty. Provide access for all poor children to effective social welfare programs such as Head Start; the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program; and the Job Corps.

Postscript

There are several views relevant to revitalizing our economy which have not been included in the central part of this program because they have not been part of the broad public debate. We present them briefly here because you may wish to include them in your discussion.

Some Americans believe that we are unlikely to restore our former high rate of productivity growth. They say that as a nation we have reached our peak and are now in decline. Our society is being destroyed by social ills. Our culture of "rugged individualism" will prevent the cooperation among business, government, and labor that is necessary in order for us to retain a top position in the global economy. For many this is a sobering perspective, but one that some believe is a realistic assessment of the situation. One of our most important tasks, according to this argument, is to adjust our mindsets and lifestyles to a steady or decreasing standard of living.

Others agree that it is unrealistic to expect that we will regain our former economic advantage, but their view is more optimistic. They believe that even though we won't achieve our former status, we will be able to bounce back and raise our productivity growth. The global economy of the 21st century may turn out to be a great leveler, making it more difficult for any one nation's economy to stay ahead of all the others for long. According to this view, America's goal should be more modest than it was during the past 50 years of what *Time* magazine once called "The American Century." Perhaps, they say, we should aspire to be within the top rank of economic powers rather than to be in the Number One position.

Some argue that the above perspectives are fatalistic, and that limited ambitions will doom us to second-class status. Still others hope that, even if such limits are inevitable, we can learn from them and respond by setting an example of economic development that takes into account human and environmental needs. According to this view, the limits of growth present us with an opportunity to re-evaluate our society. Here, the dialogue on revitalizing our economy inevitably merges with a discussion of America's broader goals.

Part II - What Immediate Steps Should We Take to Revitalize the Economy?

Since many of the steps recommended in the previous pages will require widespread changes in individual behavior or dramatic changes in policy, they will require incremental steps and are likely to take many years. The recommendations include sweeping changes in individual attitudes, in schooling, in parenting, in work habits, in business practices, and in our government. Once you have considered what long-term changes we need to make, the immediate question is "Where should we begin?"

There are some steps that America can take now which might have a significant impact by the end of the decade. Most of these steps would be initiated by the federal government. As the largest employer and the most powerful institution in the U.S., the federal government can have an immediate effect. And, because the federal government is the only institution that can reasonably claim to represent the nation as a whole, it is natural that much discussion will focus on what Washington should do.

This collection of policy proposals is provided for groups that want to look more closely at current political issues. Many of the ideas described below will be debated in the 1992 election campaign and may continue to be on the public agenda in the years ahead. This list is by no means complete; some of it may be outdated by the time you read this. You may want to find one or two good newspaper articles that describe more recent proposals for revitalizing the economy in order to augment this part of the discussion.

In discussing and evaluating these short-term initiatives, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- Which of these policies will be most likely to work?
- Which would have the most significant impact over the long term?
- Which are politically realistic?

Most of these proposals will be costly, and it's unlikely that large amounts of federal funds will be available for new programs in the 1990s. Therefore it's essential to set priorities and to decide where the money will come from. So, two other questions for your consideration are:

- Which specific step should we take first?
- How should we pay for this?

Short-Term Policy Proposals

These proposals are lumped into three broad groups. We have numbered them consecutively so that you can refer to them easily in your discussion.

Improve the work force – Those who believe that our highest priority should be a healthy work force with a high level of skills support the following steps:

1) Provide incentives, such as tax credits, for businesses to spend more on worker training.

2) Provide more funds for programs to retrain laid-off workers.

3) Provide tax credits and make loans available for anyone who wants to get more education or training on his or her own.

4) Restructure our health care system so that all Americans have insurance.

Help American companies – Those who believe that Washington should provide assistance to American companies so that they can compete on an equal footing with foreign companies propose the following:

5) Get tough with our trading partners, such as Japan, to ensure that the terms of our trade with them are fair.

6) Significantly increase spending on the infrastructure by creating large-scale public works projects.

7) Encourage business investment through tax breaks, perhaps targeted for R&D, for new plants and equipment, or for job creation.

8) Cut the capital gains tax to encourage individuals to invest more.

Reduce the budget deficit – Many who believe that increasing savings and investment is the highest priority say the first step is to reduce the federal budget deficit. But there is little agreement on how to accomplish this. Here are some of the options:

9) Increase taxes. Current proposals include higher taxes on the well-off or a tax on gasoline that would increase its price by five cents per gallon each year for 10 years.

10) Make cuts in social welfare programs.

11) Make all "entitlement" programs such as Social Security and Medicare "means-tested" so that the well-off do not receive financial assistance from the government.

12) Cut military spending to create a peace dividend.

13) Reduce government waste and inefficiency; cut "pork barrel" projects that members of Congress put into the budget for their districts.

Glossary

Budget deficit - amount by which budget expenditures exceed budget revenue, or income, during a specific period of time. Each of the federal government's annual budget deficits contributes to the total national debt.

Capital - that which makes increased production possible. Physical capital is the material goods that have been set aside to use for production rather than for consumption; an example of physical capital is a machine in a factory. Financial capital is a claim represented by a security, such as a stock or bond Businesses and governments issue securities to raise money to buy physical capital.

Gross domestic product (GDP) - the total market value of all goods and services produced in a country during a specific period of time, usually one year

Gross national product (GNP) - the total market value of all goods and services produced in a given period by labor and property supplied by residents of a country, regardless of where the labor and property are located. GNP differs from GDP because it includes the income that U.S. residents earn from investments in other countries, minus the income that people living in other countries earn from investments in the U.S.

Import quota - a limit set by one nation on the number of units of a product that can be purchased from another nation

Industrial policy - a plan developed by government, usually in collaboration with business and labor, to speed the development of key industries or technologies. This may involve government assistance in the form of funds for research and development (R&D) or in the form of tax breaks. It may also involve temporary restrictions on imports in order to protect new industries.

Inflation-adjusted - a measure of the real value, i.e. the value after the loss of purchasing power due to inflation has been deducted. For example, if your income is $10,000 and inflation is 10% per year, after one year your inflation-adjusted income is $9,000.

Infrastructure - government-owned capital goods that provide services to the public. Examples include school buildings and other public buildings, roads, bridges, railways, airports, dams, and harbors.

Investment - the current product set aside during a given period to be used for future production (in other words, an addition to the stock of capital goods) or the purchase of a financial security such as a stock or a bond.

Median family income - the middle family income. Half of all families incomes are below this figure and half are above. It is more descriptive than the average (mean) income, because when even a relatively small number of families have very high incomes, the average will be far higher than the incomes of the majority of families.

National debt - the total amount owed by a national government to all creditors, whether private or public

Productivity - average real output per unit of input. In this program, productivity usually refers to labor productivity, or the average real output per hour of labor.

Quality circle - regular meetings of workers and managers to discuss how to improve the quality and speed of production. A way to give workers regular opportunities to share ideas with managers.

Real (as in real income, real wages, etc.) - adjusted to remove the effect of inflation

Recession - a period of reduced economic activity; when described in hindsight, the phase of the business cycle extending from a peak to the next trough. When GDP goes down for two successive quarters, the economy is considered to be in recession. Real GDP usually falls throughout a recession.

Savings - money set aside, whether by private citizens or by government. Private savings come from money put aside by private citizens for retirement, for unforeseen expenses, for meeting future expenses of their children, or for boosting their own future consumption. Public savings are the result of a government budget surplus, when government income exceeds expenditures.

Tariff - a tax imposed by a government on imported goods

Trade deficit - the amount by which the total value of a nation's imports exceeds the total value of its exports during a given period of time, usually a year

Suggestions for Leading *Revitalizing America's Economy for the 21st Century*

All discussion groups are different. The participants, the dynamics of your particular group, and the nature of public affairs at the time of the discussion make this so. The following suggestions are not intended to be definitive, but rather to be representative of what other leaders have found useful as they have guided similar discussions.

The leader's job is to strike a balance between freedom and focus. To achieve the rewards that come when participants learn from each other, the leader must accept the risks that come from the spontaneity of individuals offering their unique insights. Your discussion session will be more successful and more fun if participants can share their opinions in a relaxed atmosphere, so enjoy yourself!

Especially on a subject like the economy, non-experts usually look to authorities and may be reticent to value their own views. Even though participation in this discussion does require a basic understanding of some economic concepts, achieving the goals of this discussion does not depend on economic expertise. Be sure you don't let factual details sidetrack the discussion.

Also keep in mind that this program focuses on America's productivity and long-term economic strength. Some participants may want to raise broader issues or to talk about the recession. Whatever their concerns, your discussion will be more fruitful if you help tie group members' interests to the issue of long-term economic strength.

If you are devoting only one session to the economy, we suggest that you concentrate on "Part I – The Underlying Problems and Potential Solutions: Four Views." Most of the suggestions that follow are geared to a discussion of Part I. "Part II – What Immediate Steps Should We Take to Revitalize the Economy?" helps integrate the current political debate on the economy into the longer-term policy questions. If your group wants to devote more time to discussing the economy, this second part on immediate steps could provide a framework for a second session. Some groups may want to pursue other questions about the economy by finding their own readings.

Preparing for the discussion

As you prepare for the discussion of Part I, think in terms of this general timetable for a two-hour session:

1) introductions, an overview of the general ground rules for a study circle, and a brief discussion of participants' personal concerns about America's economic strength and productivity (approximately half an hour);

2) understanding the alternative views presented in Part I (about half an hour); and

3) an open examination and debate of the views, and closing (the remaining hour).

Introductions and explaining the ground rules

Begin by asking participants to introduce themselves. Make sure that everyone understands what a study circle is and what is expected of participants. You may wish to say something like

the following: "My role is to assist in keeping discussion focused and moving along. Your role is to share your concerns and beliefs with each other. You should be willing to examine your own beliefs in light of what others say, and that will require your listening carefully to others."

Beginning the discussion

In the beginning of the discussion you should draw out participants' concerns about America's long-term economic strength. As participants share their concerns with each other, they will be laying the groundwork for their discussion of the views and proposed solutions. You may wish to provoke this discussion by asking one or both of the following questions:

What do you think are the most serious long-term problems our economy faces?

What are your personal concerns about America's long-term economic strength and productivity?

Understanding the views

In this part of the discussion, your aim is to help the group understand the essence of the views before they go on to debate their relative merits. Asking participants to explain each view with "its best face forward" can set a tone of openness and encourage the group to consider unpopular opinions. At this stage of the discussion, other participants may ask questions to clarify the views, but debate should wait until all four views have been presented. Some of the following questions might be useful:

For each of the views, ask a participant to describe it in the voice of a possible supporter of that view, even if it is not the view of that participant.

For each view, ask: *What do you think is the strongest evidence that this is what is basically wrong with our economy?*

For each of the views, ask: *What are the values and beliefs that underlie this point of view?*

Discussing the views

At this point in the discussion, ask participants to discuss the four views based upon their actual beliefs and concerns about the economy. This is where you may need to step in to make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and that all views are given a fair hearing. Your questions should assist the members in thinking about the possible consequences and tradeoffs associated with the policy steps based on each of the views. Some of the following questions might be useful:

For each of the views, ask: *What do you consider the strongest counter-evidence that this is our basic problem?*

Which of the views do you think is nearest the mark? Why?

Is there a combination of views you prefer as an explanation of what is wrong with our economy?

Do you have any views to add that do not appear here?

As the group thinks about the proposed solutions that go with the views, some of these questions may be helpful:

Which set of solutions seems most helpful?

If you could take the best elements from each set of solutions, what would your long-term economic policy look like?

Given the large federal budget deficit and the budget deficits being experienced by many states and cities, many people feel that we must come to terms with our limits. Given these constraints, how should we pay for the reforms that you favor? Would their anticipated consequences be worth the cost?

For solutions where we are not looking only to government, where would change come from? Who would initiate it?

Closing the discussion

As the discussion session comes to a close, help the group members summarize the session and think about possible avenues for continuing reflection on this issue. Consensus is not a goal of the discussion, but it will be constructive to help group members discern areas of agreement and disagreement and ways in which they have learned from each other. You might close the discussion by asking one or more of the following questions:

Have your views of the economy changed as a result of this discussion? How?

What are the main areas of agreement and disagreement that came out in this discussion?

If our discussion were to go on, what aspect of the economy would you like to take on?

What would you like to communicate to policymakers about our long-term economic problems and what should be done?

If your group is holding just one session, thank participants for attending and for sharing their views with the group. Give them and yourself a few minutes to fill out the "Follow-up Form." We would greatly appreciate your collecting and sending in these forms or asking participants to return them. The information they provide will help us as we develop future programs.

Discussing immediate steps: An optional second session

The following questions will be helpful if your group decides to take on the optional second session based on "Part II – What Immediate Steps Should We Take to Revitalize the Economy?":

Since new ideas constantly move to the top of the political agenda, your study circle should revise and add to the list of ideas presented in this section. You might ask: *What other specific policies should be included in our consideration of what Washington should do now?*

Which of these policies will likely lead to longer-term solutions?

Which of these policies will likely be effective?

Which would have the most significant impact?

Is the policy politically realistic? Can it attain the political support it will need in order to be implemented?

Should any of these steps be at the top of the political agenda?

How should the government pay for the programs you recommend?

In concluding your consideration of immediate steps, ask someone to summarize the main areas of agreement and disagreement within the group. *Is there any agreement on steps that should be taken? on steps that should be taken first? on how the programs should be paid for?*

What would you most like to communicate to officials about policies for the near term?

Please allow time at the end of your discussion for completing the "Follow-up Form." The feedback you provide by collecting and returning the forms will help us in the development of future programs.

Leading a Study Circle

The study circle leader is the most important person in determining its success or failure. It is the leader's responsibility to moderate the discussion by asking questions, identifying key points, and managing the group process. While doing all this, the leader must be friendly, understanding, and supportive.

The leader does not need to be an expert. However, thorough familiarity with the reading material and previous reflection about the directions in which the discussion might go will make the leader more effective and more comfortable in this important role.

The most difficult aspects of leading discussion groups include keeping discussion focused, handling aggressive participants, and keeping one's own ego at bay. A background of leading small group discussions or meetings is helpful. The following suggestions and principles of group leadership will be useful even for experienced leaders.

• **"Beginning is half," says an old Chinese proverb.** Set a friendly and relaxed atmosphere from the start. A quick review of the suggestions for participants will help ensure that everyone understands the ground rules for the discussion.

• **Be an active listener.** You will need to truly hear and understand what people say if you are to guide the discussion effectively. Listening carefully will set a good example for participants and will alert you to potential conflicts.

• **Stay neutral and be cautious about expressing your own values.** As the leader, you have considerable power with the group. That power should be used only for the purpose of furthering the discussion and not for establishing the correctness of a particular viewpoint.

• **Utilize open-ended questions.** Questions such as, "What other possibilities have we not yet considered?" will encourage discussion rather than elicit short, specific answers and are especially helpful for drawing out quiet members of the group.

• **Draw out quiet participants.** Do not allow anyone to sit quietly or to be forgotten by the group. Create an opportunity for each participant to contribute. The more you know about each person in the group, the easier this will be.

• **Don't be afraid of pauses and silences.** People need time to think and reflect. Sometimes silence will help someone build up the courage to make a valuable point. Leaders who tend to be impatient may find it helpful to count silently to 10 after asking a question.

• **Do not allow the group to make you the expert or "answer person."** You should not play the role of final arbiter. Let the participants decide what they believe. Allow group members to correct each other when a mistake is made.

• **Don't always be the one to respond to comments and questions.** Encourage interaction among the group. Participants should be conversing with each other, not just with the leader. Questions or comments that are directed at the leader can often be deflected to another member of the group.

• **Don't allow the group to get hung up on unprovable "facts" or assertions.** Disagreements about basic facts are common for con-

troversial issues. If there is debate over a fact or figure, ask the group if that fact is relevant to the discussion. In some cases, it is best to leave the disagreement unresolved and move on.

• **Do not allow the aggressive, talkative person or faction to dominate.** Doing so is a sure recipe for failure. One of the most difficult aspects of leading a discussion is restraining domineering participants. Don't let people call out and gain control of the floor. If you allow this to happen the aggressive will dominate, you may lose control, and the more polite people will become angry and frustrated.

• **Use conflict productively and don't allow participants to personalize their disagreements.** Do not avoid conflict, but try to keep discussion focused on the point at hand. Since everyone's opinion is important in a study circle, participants should feel safe saying what they really think – even if it's unpopular.

• **Synthesize or summarize the discussion occasionally.** It is helpful to consolidate related ideas to provide a solid base for the discussion to build upon.

• **Ask hard questions.** Don't allow the discussion to simply confirm old assumptions. Avoid following any "line," and encourage participants to re-examine their assumptions. Call attention to points of view that have not been mentioned or seriously considered, whether you agree with them or not.

• **Don't worry about attaining consensus.** It's good for the study circle to have a sense of where participants stand, but it's not necessary to achieve consensus. In some cases a group will be split; there's no need to hammer out agreement.

• **Close the session with a brief question that each participant may respond to in turn.** This will help them review their progress in the meeting and give a sense of closure.

Suggestions for Participants

The goal of a study circle is not to learn a lot of facts, or to attain group consensus, but rather to deepen each person's understanding of the issue. This can occur in a focused discussion when people exchange views freely and consider a variety of viewpoints. The process – democratic discussion among equals – is as important as the content.

The following points are intended to help you make the most of your study circle experience and to suggest ways in which you can help the group.

• **Listen carefully to others.** Make sure you are giving everyone the chance to speak.

• **Maintain an open mind.** You don't score points by rigidly sticking to your early statements. Feel free to explore ideas that you have rejected or failed to consider in the past.

• **Strive to understand the position of those who disagree with you.** Your own knowledge is not complete until you understand other participants' points of view and why they feel the way they do. It is important to respect people who disagree with you; they have reasons for their beliefs. You should be able to make a good case for positions you disagree with. This level of comprehension and empathy will make you a much better advocate for whatever position you come to.

• **Help keep the discussion on track.** Make sure your remarks are relevant; if necessary, explain how your points are related to the discussion. Try to make your points while they are pertinent.

• **Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the discussion.** If you tend to talk a lot in groups, leave room for quieter people. Be aware that some people may want to speak but are intimidated by more assertive people.

• **Address your remarks to the group rather than the leader.** Feel free to address your remarks to a particular participant, especially one who has not been heard from or who you think may have special insight. Don't hesitate to question other participants to learn more about their ideas.

• **Communicate your needs to the leader.** The leader is responsible for guiding the discussion, summarizing key ideas, and soliciting clarification of unclear points, but he/she may need advice on when this is necessary. Chances are you are not alone when you don't understand what someone has said.

• **Value your own experience and opinions.** Everyone in the group, including you, has unique knowledge and experience; this variety makes the discussion an interesting learning experience for all. Don't feel pressured to speak, but realize that failing to speak means robbing the group of your wisdom.

• **Engage in friendly disagreement.** Differences can invigorate the group, especially when it is relatively homogeneous on the surface. Don't hesitate to challenge ideas you disagree with. Don't be afraid to play devil's advocate, but don't go overboard. If the discussion becomes heated, ask yourself and others whether reason or emotion is running the show.

• **Remember that humor and a pleasant manner can go far in helping you make your points.** A belligerent attitude may prevent acceptance of your assertions. Be aware of how your body language can close you off from the group.

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Follow-up Form

Please take a few minutes to complete and return this follow-up form. Your answers will help us improve the Public Talk Series material and make it a more valuable resource.

1) Did you use *Revitalizing America's Economy for the 21st Century*? ___ yes ___ no
If so, how? (check all that apply)
___ in a discussion group ___ for reference or research material ___ for lecture or classroom use

2) What did you think of the program?

	very good				poor
content	1	2	3	4	5
format	1	2	3	4	5
balance, fairness	1	2	3	4	5
suggestions for leaders	1	2	3	4	5
suggestions for participants	1	2	3	4	5
supplemental readings	1	2	3	4	5

3) Please answer the following if you held or were part of a discussion group.

Your role was ____ the organizer ____ the discussion leader ____ a participant

What was the sponsoring organization (if any)? _____

How many attended? _____

Where was the program held? city _____ state _____

How many times did your group meet to discuss this topic? ____

Participants in this discussion group (check all that apply)
____ came together just for this discussion
____ hold discussions regularly
____ meet regularly, but not usually for issue-oriented discussion

Would you use study circles again? _____ yes _____ no

4) What future topics would you like to see in SCRC's Public Talk Series?

5) Other comments?

Name _____

Organization _____

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or FAX to (203) 928-3713.
See reverse side for information on other Public Talk Series programs.

Public Talk Series Programs and Other Resources Available from the Study Circles Resource Center

Publications of the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC) include the Public Talk Series (PTS); training material for study circle organizers, leaders, and writers; a quarterly newsletter; a clearinghouse list of study circle material developed by a variety of organizations; and a bibliography on study circles and small-group learning. Prices for PTS programs are noted below. (You are welcome to order a single copy of PTS programs and then photocopy as many as necessary for your group.) All other publications are free of charge.

Public Talk Series (PTS) programs

___ Special 1992 **Election Year Discussion Set** $5.00 for the set:
- *The Health Care Crisis in America*
- *Welfare Reform: What Should We Do for Our Nation's Poor?*
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- *The Role of the United States in a Changing World*

Domestic Policy discussion programs - $2.00 each
___ 203 - *Revitalizing America's Economy for the 21st Century*
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___ 302 - *The Right to Die*
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___ 304 - *Welfare Reform: What Should We Do for Our Nation's Poor?*
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___ 107 - *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Looking for a Lasting Peace* *
___ 102 - *America's Role in the Middle East* *
___ 104 - *The Role of the United States in a Changing World* *

* based on material developed by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project of the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University

Other resources from the Study Circles Resource Center

Pamphlets
___ "An Introduction to Study Circles" (20 pages)
___ "Guidelines for Organizing and Leading a Study Circle" (32 pages)
___ "Guidelines for Developing Study Circle Course Material" (32 pages)

Resource Briefs (single pages)
___ "What Is a Study Circle?"
___ "Leading a Study Circle"
___ "Organizing a Study Circle"
___ "The Role of the Participant"
___ "Developing Study Circle Course Material"
___ "What Is the Study Circles Resource Center?"
___ "The Study Circles Resource Center Clearinghouse"

Connections (single-page descriptions of programs)
___ Adult Religious Education
___ Youth Programs
___ Study Circle Researchers
___ Unions

Focus on Study Circles (free quarterly newsletter)
___ Sample copy
___ Subscription

Other Resources
___ Clearinghouse list of study circle material
___ Annotated bibliography on study circles, small-group learning, and participatory democracy

Please send in your order, with payment if you order PTS programs, with your follow-up form on reverse.

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